

March 14 1951
[] said
Poppe is teaching at
the U.S. War College, Wash.

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TO: A/Director, Special Operations

From: Special Operations Sec.

DATE: 13 May 1948

Signature:

SUBJECT: POPPE Nikolaus - Operation "FATHER CHRISTMAS"

1. On 12 May 1948 I accompanied POPPE to Frankfurt/Main.
2. First contact was established with POPPE's friend MENGES at Gutleutstr 102. My presence was left unexplained to MENGES. POPPE satisfied himself that correspondence through MENGES had, in fact, been bona fide as far as MENGES was concerned.
3. We proceeded with MENGES in tow to a CIC office in the Nordendstr to meet a CIC officer of MENGES' acquaintance whom he had taken into his confidence regarding POPPE.
4. This CIC officer, named MAHNER (pronounced MAYNER, ex VIENNA 1926) then took POPPE and myself to the HQ in the IG Farben building to meet the originator of the American enquiries re POPPE, one Mr. OFFIE. OFFIE's function was described to me by MAHNER as political adviser to General HUBNER.
5. MAHNER informed me in a private conversation that he was the American officer who had come to the LEMGO area to search for POPPE and that he had done so on OFFIE's instigation. OFFIE had painted him a picture of operational urgency and had told him that he, OFFIE, had come over from the States specially to deal with this business, which he, MAHNER, was not disposed to believe, knowing OFFIE's function in FRANKFURT. MAHNER claimed that he deliberately laid off the hunt once he found POPPE had gone to ground, as he feared that too persistent an enquiry would alarm POPPE and drive him elsewhere.
6. Immediately before his interview with OFFIE, POPPE displayed some agitation as to how much he should say about his present circumstances. He asked me if he could mention that his children were in England, and how he should explain my presence. He needed no encouragement to say nothing to anybody about his present whereabouts and himself proposed that all further communications from the American authorities to him should be made via USLO HERFORD. I instructed him to leave all explanations involving myself, my unit and those taking care of him generally, to me.

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7. POPPE had an interview of 20 minutes alone with OFFIE. He reports that OFFIE said he had come specially from WASHINGTON to deal with his case among other specific problems. OFFIE questioned him on general and personal subjects in such a way that the sequence of questions was described by POPPE as "incoherent". No definite promise was made and nothing specific arranged except that OFFIE would, at some future date, unspecified, communicate with POPPE again via USLO. POPPE states that OFFIE said quite categorically in answer to his question that State Department permission would NOT be necessary for POPPE to immigrate and that it could be arranged through him.

8. After this interview I had five minutes with Mr. OFFIE in the presence of POPPE and MAHNER. OFFIE informed me that the purpose of the exercise was for him to satisfy himself that POPPE was alive and well in order to be able to reassure friends of POPPE's in America who were worried about him. He then informed me that certain Universities, unspecified, in America, would be interested to employ POPPE and that this might be arranged. He asked me if POPPE was, in fact, as well fed as he said he was, as he looked undernourished. We arranged for further communications to be made via USLO. OFFIE's tone throughout was pompous and slightly offensive. He was at pains to have me in the room for as short a time as possible.

9. POPPE viewed the whole exercise with mixed feelings. On the one hand he is satisfied that so much trouble would not be taken by correspondents in America, Senior Governmental Officials in Frankfurt, and itinerant officers searching for him in the British Zone unless some serious preposition were in mind; as against which he was told nothing definite yesterday, he was asked questions, the answer to which was evident from the written biography that he submitted, and he feels that it will probably be some months before any definite offer will be made.

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